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3

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

MRS. MARY GILBERT,

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

Mr. Francis Gilbert,

(HER HUSBAND,)

Second Son of the Honourable NATHANIEL GILBERT, of Antigua.

IN A LETTER TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

BY

HENRIETTA F. GILBERT.

LONDON:

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MEMOIRS

OF

MRS. MARY GILBERT,

&c. &c.

REV. SIR,

SHOULD the following account of my late invaluable aunt, Mrs. MARY GILBERT, be deemed worthy of publication, it will gratify one, who feels she ought not to be surprised if it be refused; and whose chief hopes are founded on the subject affording some apology for the defects of the writer.

Mrs. Mary Gilbert was born at St, Alban's, in the county of Hertford, on the 24th of February, 1733. She sprang from an ancient family of the name of Walsh; the death of her father, when she was but three years of age, materially affected the fortunes of his children; and in 1750, at seventeen, the subject of this account launched on the ocean of life, with a husband, who, though just twice her age, was without compass or chart, and therefore could not steer a beloved wife into the haven of peace. Gay and thoughtless himself, he was delighted that she was so too; but ere she attained her twentieth year, that still small voice, which often speaks more powerfully than thunder, reminded my maternal friend, *she must die, and after death must come to judgment!*

The admonition was duly regarded. For some

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time she strove, by the works of the *law*, to silence the suggestions of conscience; but soon became sensible, that were it possible for her to live spotless for the time to come, her doing so could not atone for the least of her past sins. While thus restless and unhappy, inquiring "Who will shew me any good?" and resorting in vain to every popular preacher, not branded with the name of *Methodist*, she providentially called to see a poor dying woman, at the very time when a Methodist gentleman was striving to overthrow some self-righteous notions entertained by the person in question. The two visitors entered into conversation, and the delegate of heaven at last prevailed over the fears of falling into error, which had kept the sincere warm-hearted seeker from hearing either of the two Mr. Wesleys: and, as it was Sunday evening, she consented to go immediately, and judge for herself. Her guide put her into a pew, and left her, like an ethereal messsenger; for never more did my valuable friend see, never was she able to discover, to whom she was obliged. The Rev. Charles Wesley was the ambassador of Christ, who so effectually shewed what his delighted hearer sought; that doubting no longer, she soon threw in her lot among those whom she resolved should be her people, and their God her God; and the much-loved minister was remembered on her death-bed. This definitive step was not taken without raising a storm of persecution, some of which was of the most dangerous sort. Mr. Leadbetter, stung to the soul at the alteration discovered in his wife's conduct, particularly in point of dress, expressed his astonishment that she should expect to be made *wiser* and *better* by those who had not one *as wise or excellent as herself among them.* At another time, he declared the day of her joining the society should be that of their final separation; and, at a third, furnished her with an elegant

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lantern, vowing, "If she would go to hear these people, it should not be in the dark." At last he would have compromised, by consenting to her hearing the two Mr. Wesleys, and their most celebrated preachers! In all this, she came off more than conqueror, abiding alike the storms of passion, and the seductive allurements of unsubdued tenderness and regard; assuring her husband, she was as ready now, as at any former period, to obey his commands in all things that did not affect her salvation; but was determined to judge for herself in all that did; well convinced he could not answer for her at the bar of offended justice.

I ought to have observed, that in 1752 she became a mother, but her son was only lent a few hours. The next year she was blessed with a lovely girl, who, about this time, June, 1755, was snatched from her, falling a victim to the small pox at two years and a half old, and going off suddenly when the disorder seemed abated. This severe affliction required all the aids religion could afford, and, with them, was so exquisitely felt as almost to *shake reason.* By this stroke, more then ever detached from earth, she trod more firmly the path to heaven; and was not only the instrument of leading a young friend, and two of her servants in the same way, but had the comfort of finding her powerful influence, in a good measure, subduing the prejudices of her husband; who even heard, accidentally, while coming out of chapel with her, that she had joined the society sometime before;—heard it in silence, without expressing the smallest resentment. Mr. C. Wesley's *kind efforts*, and *fascinating manners*, particularly charmed him; he greatly regarded him; learned to admire some of the preachers; and too soon required all that could be done to smooth his passage to eternity; a consumption, which began, and finished its commission in six months, termi-

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nating his life in October, 1758; little more than eight years after he had obtained the blessing of such a wife;—declaring to the last her excellence; and that she had done every thing she could for his soul and body; and leaving a good hope he was eternally obliged to her. During his illness, he was constantly visited by *one* of the most eminent preachers; objecting to *more than one*, and regretting that that one could not be his favourite Mr. C. Wesley, who then resided at Bristol.

Soon after this second bereavement, Providence brought my beloved aunt acquainted with Mr. Nathaniel Gilbert, and his wife, who had come to England two years before on a religious account, and were about to return to Antigua, their native place; intending to propagate the knowledge of that Gospel they had become more fully instructed in, under the ministry of the Messrs. Wesleys; and wishing to be accompanied by one or two equally zealous in the best of causes. The ardent mind and warm zeal of their new acquaintance, freed from the ties of husband and child, soon embraced the scheme; and, much against the inclination of a favourite brother, she embarked with them in the year 1759, for that distinguished colony; so persuaded she was directed by heaven, that her "heart never failed in some very threatning dangers met with in the voyage." One of these occurred on their embarkation. The vessel, in which Mr. Gilbert, eager to obey his father's orders to return, engaged a cabin, had been an old French one, taken up by government to convey anchors to his Majesty's yard at English harbour. The captain, too much addicted to liquor, to know exactly what he was about, summoned his passengers on board late at night, after giving them leave to lodge on shore. As soon as they obeyed, he assured them he should not sail till the morning, and finally, *most providentially* weighed anchor

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while it was dark, taking with him Mr. Francis Gilbert, and a brother of my aunt's, and a lieutenant in the navy, who intended staying, till obliged to quit the next day! The poor crazy ship now fell so much on one side, as imminently to endanger the lives of those on board; its want of ballast and proper stowage, rendering it doubtful whether it was *intended* to reach its apparently destined port. Mr. Walsh instantly applied to the owners, who had gone on shore; telling them what he saw, and on their framing evasions and excuses, spoke out, declaring what he was, and assuring them if they did not take in ballast at the next port, he would go to the Admiralty and inform against them. This threat had the desired effect, and they thought fit to put *forty ton of ballast* on board; but when Messrs. Walsh and Gilbert left the vessel, they gazed after it with tearful eyes and aching hearts, fearing they had taken a last look of friends and relatives so dear. My heroic friend, informed by Mr. Gilbert of the danger her brother apprehended, (who at the same time told her he intended to brave it with his family, but intreated her not to risk her safety on their account,) persisted in going, declaring she would not recede, having counted the cost, and being fully resolved to share all their perils. Another narrow escape took place at Torbay, where they had a most violent storm, and where the captain refused to cut his cable, though it seemed impossible to draw it up, and the ship was in *instant danger of foundering!* Providence here again interposed, and the strength of the gale broke the rope, giving the sea room necessary to their preservation. Even when anchored in English harbour, danger was not over, for the first thing they met was a ship of war on fire!

In the new world, our female missionary, (do not start at the term, Rev. Sir, till you hear

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further,) bent down her attention, and all the resources of a cultivated refined mind, to the instruction of poor untaught Africans; alike disregarding the sneers of the worldling, (some of whom were compelled to admire the form religion wore in her,) the advice of those who wished her less singular, and the astonishment of all; meeting with various success. Among other instances, the late highly favoured, and now much afflicted writer, has heard her relate with pleasure, humility, and gratitude, but in far more interesting terms then she is able to use, the affecting story of a very young negro woman, who drew near to listen while she was endeavouring to instruct one far advanced in the journey of life. The pleased and pleasing girl, seemed in a moment to comprehend what the other was unable to understand. A spark from heaven appeared in one instant to illuminate her mind, and soften her heart; and she strove in her own language, evidently to little purpose, to convey to her hoary fellow slave the instruction just received by herself. *She had heard to purpose*; such a plant was not neglected; and though my charming friend left the island before the full effect of this effort was known, she learned in about two yeas that the youthful convert had lived and died proving herself one of those who would bless the hour her dear instructer embarked for a trans-atlantic shore: which, in 1762, she was induced, after three years residence, to quit, having in that time, been brought to the verge of the grave by a most violent fever then rife in the island; immediately after receiving the dying testimony, and hearing the last sigh of a young mulatto woman, summoned by this disease into a world of spirits; but not unprepared for the change.

In my loved aunt's severe affliction, she was for many days completely deranged; and during

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this time of deprivation, starting up in a *sleepless bed*, she uttered a prayer so fervent, pathetic, *rational*, and devout, that it astonished a lady who was then quite unacquainted with the Gospel, but one of the kind nurses about her. This never forgotten petition, it seems, concluded with intreating, that, "if this sickness was to be unto death, she might *never sleep again*; but if not, might *fall asleep immediately!*" Totally unconscious herself, this friend who preceeded her some years to heaven, declared the words were hardly off her lips, when she dropt into a most profound sleep, which lasted a few minutes only, and she awoke to rave as much as ever!

On the return of my dear aunt to her native land, she resumed her former acquaintance with some of the most pious of the society; and as "Great souls by instinct to each other turn," it is no wonder she was still favoured with the friendship of the two reverend heads of it; and the correspondence of Mr. J. Wesley.—Mr. C. Wesley, having spoken in high terms of her to a contemporary luminary, she wrote to him, after an intimate acquaintance of several months, under the same roof, "Mrs. Leadbetter is *all* you represented her to be!"—On the 17th of November, 1767, the attachment subsisting between herself and the Gilbert family, was more closely cemented by her becoming the wife of Mr. F. Gilbert, with the advantage of the fullest knowledge of each other; and as it proved such a *oneness* of sentiment, such entire esteem and approbation, as rendered them indeed help mates.

To shew Mr. J. Wesley was as much pleased with the lady in question as his brother could be, allow me to give his short, but most comprehensive answer, when Mr. Gilbert, his son in the gospel, asked his opinion of her—viz. "*No man in his senses can object to her.*" As so near and interest-

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ing a connection took place, and as the *Gilbert name* is well known in the *religious* world, I may perhaps be excused for digressing so far as to give some short account of the man, for whose sake the honoured subject of this memoir assumed the dear appellation; and became one of its brightest ornaments. He was the second, and at his outset in life, *apparently* favourite son of the Honourable Nathaniel Gilbert, of the island of Antigua; who at a very early age placed him in a large mercantile concern in the town of St. John's, putting under, or rather over him, one whom he conceived to be a steady sedate man, as clerk, in whom, both by precept and example, he taught his son to repose the most implicit confidence. That son, better calculated to *spend* than *make* a fortune, caressed by those whom his vivacity enlivened, or his friendship charmed, availed himself of the liberty thus afforded, and gave his ungrateful subaltern all the opportunity he could require for undermining those who attributed to him a virtue he was unacquainted with. Suffice it to say, the clerk rose, and his employer sunk!—In one appalling moment he found, on overlooking his affairs, that *ruin was before him!*—Struck to the soul, he blamed himself most severely for past carelessness, and fled from what *I must call his unjustly incensed father.* Religious impressions were the fruit of temporal afflictions, and in the blue mountains of Jamaica, he sought and found that peace which does not depend on the *honesty* or *dishonesty*, *gratitude* or *ingratitude* of any man; the *smile* or *frown* of any *earthly* parent.

After some time he came to England, was introduced to Messrs. Wesleys, and was for a short time a *travelling* preacher in their connexion, and, until his last long illness prevented, he remained a *local* preacher. It ought, however, to be observed, that his father once wrote, offering again to set him

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up, but he thankfully declined it, little imagining that his seemingly relenting parent, who died in 1761, would bequeath property worth much more than *forty thousand pounds sterling*, to his eldest son, and exclude him from the *pittance* he granted his younger children—would make a will, without naming him! No doubt, this was more felt on his father's account, and as a mark of parental alienation and disregard, than for its own sake; for Mr. F. Gilbert was never a worshipper of Plutus, never, at any period of life, bowed at his shrine. The year after this painful occurrence, he visited his native country. He had been the instrument of stirring up his elder brother, who after spending two years in England, returned to impart to *all* of *every colour* in Antigua who would receive it, the religious knowledge acquired in his visit. For the furtherance of this valuable end, on Mr. F. Gilbert's arrival, a place was hired at St. John's for preaching, and his labours were crowned with abundant success. In 1764 he returned to England, and in 1767, as before mentioned, received in a much loved wife, a soother of his every care, and a participater of all that is lent to sweeten life. In a letter now before me to the brother above named, he thus speaks,—"I do not say she is *one of a thousand*, but I say she is *one of a million*."—"*This you, Rev. Sir, will say*, is the language of a *partial fond husband*:"—but remember, it is also that of a *deeply pious man*—no skirmisher in the Christian warfare—no half thinking, half acting professor. This complete union took place in Chester, where, and at Whitchurch, in Shropshire, proving their faith by their works, they passed the years that intervened between that period and early in the year 1773, when they embarked for Antigua, to give up to Mr. and Mrs. Nathanial Gilbert three out of five daughters committed to their care. The two eldest had, to

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the deep regret of their affectionate relatives, found early graves, while with them; leaving a bright example to all, and finding the happy effects of seeking their Creator in the days of their youth.

During this visit, my dear aunt became acquainted with the late Mrs. Isabella Graham, of New York, of whom the Rev. Dr. Mason gives such an animated, and animating account in a funeral sermon; to the fidelity of which my pious friend added her testimony, from what she could see in their too short intercourse. But Mrs. Graham's eulogist does not notice an incident that may perhaps appear in biographical particulars of her, if the religious public is indulged with such; it is, however, so interesting, I will not pass it over here. Immediately, on the loss of her almost idolised husband, she was seized with the dreadful idea of his being buried alive! The speedy interment of corpses in the West Indies rendered this less improbable; and Mr. Graham was hurried out of life by a fever which did not allow of procrastination. A dream, probably the result of her fears, greatly increased them; and she was so violently distrest, that her friends almost feared for her reason. With difficulty they persuaded her to consider her situation, and postpone the execution of a scheme which she adopted, as the only means of relieving her mind, though it might confirm her horrid idea—viz. taking up the body! This doubtful and dangerous enterprise was accomplished as soon as possible after the birth of her hapless infant, never welcomed by the smiles of a father—and eleven months after Mr. Graham's remains had slept in parent earth. The reluctant consent of the General was obtained, provided the whole was done by six o'clock in the morning, while most of the inhabitants of the island would be in bed. At this time, Mrs. Graham, attended by her sympathizing friend, and that friend's hus-

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band, repaired to the church of St. John, and waited, I think near the communion table, while two or three negroes opened the grave; and immediately placing the coffin in a large box prepared for the purpose, brought it into the further part of the church. When about to raise the lid, her two associates entreated Mrs. G. to allow them *alone* to survey the body, promising they would tell her the truth *be it what it might!* Mrs. Graham thankfully, but *positively* refused the offer; declaring no eyes but her own would satisfy her—it would *be quite impossible.* They all, therefore, advanced to the coffin, the lid was taken off, and the *unmoved* body shewed Mrs. Graham, her fears were groundless; but the scene exhibited was sufficiently shocking.—The face cloth was removed—Death reigned indeed—Putrefaction, and all its attendant horrors, were here! That loved countenance was changed to awful blackness; and, probably, the distressed heroic widow, was as ready as the father of the faithful, to bury her dead out of her sight! She first, however, with her own hands, carefully covered the still dear remains with a sheet; the coffin and box lids were replaced; Mr. Graham's body was once more committed to the tomb, to wait the summons of the last trump; and Mrs. Graham returned from what must have been unsupportable, had she not been sustained by the relief found, in proving her fate not so transcendently wretched as she had imagined. My dear aunt took down, *verbatim*, from her friend, the last words of this affectionate husband; but I will here end this, I trust, not uninteresting digression, and resume the subject before attempted.

In April, 1774, Mr. and Mrs. F. Gilbert had the heartfelt pain of witnessing the death of Mr. N. Gilbert, who was hastily summoned to heaven. On his decease they removed to St. John's, where

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Mr. Gilbert took charge of the little flock before watched over by both brothers: and his wife continued the labours of love she had resumed on revisiting Antigua. The next year, the physicians prescribed leaving that much favoured colony, as the only means of saving Mr. Gilbert's life; and they embarked for England, March 4, on board the Brothers, captain John Hope, without any probability of his completing the voyage. Happily sea-air was made the means of so soon recruting him, that he was able to minister to his dear partner, who became so extremely ill that he, in his turn, anticipated the loss of the one most loved by him.

Their passage was stormy to a violent degree, but they made Scilly on the 20th of April. The next day the captain attempted to weather it, but there fell a dead calm; the tide set in shore, the vessel drove fast, and so near as to receive the spray of the sea beating against the rocks! All hope was at an end! The captain, stamping, called up the men who had been released from labour; and when the poor half-woke fellows ascended from the hold, they were greeted with, "Not a man off the deck, for your lives!"—In this awful moment, as a last effort, the captain and mate agreed to attempt veering; and my loved aunt and her husband resorted to Him who alone could give success, to implore a blessing; but they implored in vain—the ship could not obey the helm, for want of wind—*Death—instant Death*, now menaced indeed; for even that *Forlorn Hope*, the long boat, was denied; the captain, most strangely, always leaving it in Antigua! Mr. Gilbert, however, assured his dear fellow sufferer, that though he could not account, or see room for the idea, something whispered "all will yet be well;" and so it proved, for even after the captain had visited the cabin to take his most valuable papers, and cash

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with him, and prepare to swim for life, a breeze, from the only quarter which could save, obeyed in an instant the Almighty order; and after wafting them from the rocks, and out of danger, died immediately away; and another calm succeeded; but before they had proceeded far, a boat from St. Mary's, one of the Scilly Islands, conveyed ten gigantic men on board their vessel, demanding large supplies, which the captain did not think it prudent to refuse, and telling him they had been *on the watch to assist;* assured him had he succeeded in tacking, the ship would instantly have gone down, as a large rock was so near the stern it must inevitably have struck upon it! In this instance prayer was heard, though apparently rejected; and their preservation was so evidently providential, that my grateful, thankful aunt, thought *infidelity itself must own it;* but the event proved she was mistaken, and that if "in the dark an athiest half believes a God," danger has not so salutary an effect on one of those "wretches who fight their own belief, and labour to be lost;" or if it has, safety restores the one, as light does the other, to his former opinion.—An *unbelieving believer*, a fellow passenger, annoyed them through the voyage; but when every moment threatened death, his pallid countenance, sunk spirits, and faultering voice, confessed his fears—he *trembled* at the grim monarch's approach, and began, no doubt, to apprehend a final reckoning.

My *exulting friend* now called on him to acknowledge the hand of God in their signal deliverance; but her zeal almost betrayed her into anger, when the poor creature blasphemously and rudely declared, she was "always repeating the name of God, and attributing every good to Him, never remembering what a clever experienced captain they had!!"—The captain, however, was not disposed to ascribe to himself command over the

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elements; and on Mr. G.'s observing to him just after, how wonderful and providential their escape was, he warmly acquiesced, saying, "*none but God could have done it;*" and when Mr. G. added, "I think as we prayed for deliverance, we ought to return thanks for safety;" he agreed, and joined in so doing. Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert kept the day annually. Little did my maternal friend imagine she should survive that memorable 21st of April just forty-one years, and its last anniversary be that on which, escaping all the storms and dangers of Time, she should land for ever on the blissful shore of Eternity.

Mr. Gilbert found his affairs much deranged by the death of his brother; but found also more to admire in "a wife born for adversity;" who had given from the 17th of November, 1767, evident proofs she had not joined her fate to his from worldly motives. His health, which appeared so well restored, flagged on the approach of winter; and rapidly declined for some time; and for two years he led *a dying life*. On the first of July, 1779, his release was signed, and his beloved and most tenderly attached partner, though she survived almost 37 years, spent nearly the whole of each anniversary in retirement and devotion; more evidently affected on the last, than many are on the first return of such a day: and her Journal makes frequent and most affectionate mention of him. Among other papers invaluable to *me*, because written by *her*, I find the following account, apparently intended for some particular, but not specified purpose.

"Mr. Gilbert was not a pompous, but a solid Christian; he walked much in the valley of Humility, and very close with God, whom he seemed to set always before him, being in the fear of the Lord all the day long. He had a watchful, recollected spirit, and was circumspect in all things,

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ever aiming to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, and yet as *knowing* nothing, *depending* upon nothing but Jesus, and him crucified. That adorable name charmed all his fears, and was, to his enlightened mind, as ointment poured forth. He had been a member of Mr. Wesley's Society about thirty years, and it was observed by those who had long intimacy with him, that he never deviated from the right path, or seemed to turn back, or grow remiss in the performance of any duty. He steadily adhered to the revealed Truth, he honoured his ministers, loved his brethren, and extended his charity universally. He was a sincere friend, an affectionate brother, a good master, and the best of husbands. He never suffered any business ever so urgent, nor sickness itself, to prevent his praying daily both morning and evening with his partner; whom he also helped by kind admonitions, warnings, and exhortations, watching over her soul, as being one with his, and for which he thought himself accountable in the day of the Lord. He bore a long and painful illness with calm submission, and entire resignation to his heavenly Father's will; the last months of his life he suffered much, being so ill that every day might reasonably have been expected to have been his last. He was sensible that his time was come, and waited patiently for that great change, earnestly longing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, of which he had a full assurance. His confidence was never shaken; but though his faith was tried as in a furnace, yet it was found to the glory of its great object and author. He expressed a grateful sense of the care and kindness of those about him, prayed affectionately for them, and left his dying blessing to them. A day or two before he died, he expressed himself as being so filled with love to all mankind, that it exceeded all that he had ever felt before. Almost his last

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words were, "Come, Lord Jesus, help thy weak creature, perfect strength in my weakness, and hasten to take thy servant home;" to which he afterwards added, "thy will be done."—He exchanged earth for heaven in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

My loved aunt, thus left a widow indeed, had many severe trials from time to time, to exercise her faith; but, amidst them all, she experienced much divine consolation. About the beginning of February, 1781, she felt, what she believed a providential intimation, to go to Antigua, and her way being made open and clear, confirmed the idea; and on the 23d of May, she once more left her native country, embarking on board the William and Elizabeth, captain George Young. She soon found she should not want opportunities for exercising faith and patience; for almost all the gentlemen, among the passengers, were of the number of those, whose glory it is to dare the Majesty of Heaven, and to live without God in the world. On account of her sex and family, they were constrained to show every punctilio of politeness yet could scarce refrain the laugh, at one whom they probably hated, for her allegiance to the conqueror of the prince of darkness; and they succeeded in rendering her time "truly disagreeable," though they could not cut off the intercourse between her, and the captain of her salvation.

On the 27th, however, only four days after sailing, the ringleader of the band could no longer restrain himself, but proceeded to personal invective at the dinner table, because my beloved aunt daily requested the captain to ask a blessing. His companions in sin appeared ashamed of his departure from a character dearer to them than that of Christian—they felt compelled to respect the lady, whose religion they hated, and resented

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the affront offered her. She, desirous of escaping from such a set, entreated the *poor captain*, who said grace, merely because she would not fail to remind him it was proper, to hail the Fanny, a ship in the fleet bound to Antigua, declaring she would pay a second passage, rather than witness and suffer such behaviour. He, well apprized how such a step would affect his character, urged her much to give up the idea; all the scoffers, the chief alone excepted, apologized; and afterwards uttered fewer blasphemies *in her hearing*. In two or three days more, the vaunting hero was attacked by a most violent and universal fit of the gout, and was obliged to the laudanum of her he had insulted, which was immediately offered for the mitigation of his suffering. Thus, banished from table, and confined to bed, he remained till they made Barbadoes, when, with much difficulty, and still groaning with pain, he was landed without hope of recovery. This was July 16th; on the 19th, they sailed for Antigua, and, after a continued rough passage, arrived there on the 26th, where my released friend found Mr. Baxter watching over the remains of the flock, once under the care of her much-loved husband. Mr. Baxter's time was too much occupied by his secular employment, to admit of his spending much of it in preaching, in St. John's, at least, where the Sunday service was performed, by his coming from English Harbour on Saturday night, and returning the next evening. His labours had, however, been owned, and no doubt he felt the reward. My zealous aunt, finding the fields white to harvest, and almost without a labourer, overcame her natural diffidence, and not only met a class of white, and another of coloured women, but opened her house on Friday evenings, for females of all colours, coloured and black men, excluding white from the privilege, under a too humble idea, of not being useful to

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them, and want of freedom in speaking before them. These meetings commenced with singing and prayer, a chapter was then expounded, and she closed as she began. Many, very many, acknowledged the signal benefit derived from them; a lady, who died some years since, and appeared, at the time alluded to, far from righteousness, ascribed her first awakening to them; and my pious friend had the pleasure of hearing, that she proved on a death bed she had not believed in vain. Mr. Baxter was aware of the advantage of her influence, and the credit she brought to the cause; he shewed he was; and I attribute no more to her than if he was alive he would acquiesce in, when I assert, she was the proposer of erecting a chapel, preaching being then in a poor leaky house, for which the Society paid about twenty pounds sterling per annum. She was made steward, or as a preacher pleasantly called her, *Stewardess*: of course received the subscriptions for building; and though I never heard what she gave towards the accomplishment of her plan, I knew her too well to doubt its being much more than *prudent*, "*be ye warmed, be ye clothed*" professors would in like circumstances have given.

And now, before I proceed further, allow me, Rev. Sir, to bespeak your pardon for egotism; but, oh! the heart that addresses you, must indeed be harder than a mill stone, if it did not feel it impossible to pass silently over incidents relative *to self*.

In November, 1784, *one who intended me any thing but good*, sent me from St. Kitt's back to Antigua; but "God, (may I dare to say *my God?*) turned the curse into a blessing," for at the most deserted period in my life, a life *orphanage in childhood has not rendered prosperous*, the dear subject of this account invited me to her house, and a *parental* though *juvenile* brother, little older than myself, was much gratified by my

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becoming her inmate on the first of August, 1785. And can my heart do less than dissolve in tenderness and love, when I reflect that *death alone has divided us*, when I remember that after the strictest scrutiny, I cannot make out that the whole of my absences from her *exceeded*, if they *amounted* to 12 months; though had she survived till the first of this sad August, I should have enjoyed her society thirty-one years!! Ought I not to feel unbounded gratitude to Him who bestowed on me so high a privilege? To return. I found my new mother engaged in these good works; and I soon loved one I before admired. I found her likewise with a frame always too delicate, and a mind too sensibly affected by the good and ill of life, not to influence its frail partner. A few months after my coming to her, she was brought to the gate of death, by removing to a house newly painted; but as she had more to do and to suffer, her life was spared.

On Christmas-day, 1786, we rejoiced at the arrival of Dr. Coke and the Preachers, who were blown by adverse winds to Antigua, instead of America. Just before this period, Mr. Baxter had given up his place in the yard, and now resided in St. John's. On the arrival of the preachers she gave up her evening meeting with pleasure, regarding it no longer necessary.

In 1789 my loved friend was again within sight of heaven, a deep decline appearing to be the messenger sent to summon her. Sea-air was prescribed; Mr. and Mrs. Baxter urged her accompanying them to St. Vincent, where they were stationed; and we spent, I think, five or six weeks in that island, without her finding the least benefit; on the contrary, she grew much worse; and returned apparently to finish her course in dear Antigua. A stormy and uncommonly dangerous and tedious passage, however, most wonderfully restored her; and I again saw my highly valued aunt

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given back from the grave. In 1791, rejoicing in the prosperity of Zion, and hoping her worldly affairs were in a train to be speedily settled, my dear aunt took leave of a people she loved, and who appeared attached to her, and once more sought her native shore. We embarked Easter-day, the 24th of April, on board the James and Rebecca, captain Clark. My pious friend was not now, as in her former voyage, constrained to pray, with the Psalmist, "Lord, gather not my soul with the wicked." The captain, though he had not a pleasant temper, was not without some sense of religion. The gentlemen passengers were but two; one, a merchant of the island, was friendly and sociable; the other, eldest son of one of the first families in it, would have graced St. James's; but thought it not necessary to prove his sense by defying his Maker, and his gentility, by affronting those who differed from him in opinion. The first Sunday after we came on board, he asked my aunt, with whom he seemed much pleased, whether she would like the church prayers to be read. Surprized, but highly gratified, she eagerly answered in the affirmative; he read them, as if accustomed to do so, and in a style that made us regret, he had not chosen the church instead of the navy. When prayers were ended, he read one of the late Archbishop Secker's lectures, given him by a sister, and marked in several places with the days on which they had been read. His Grace's lecture lost nothing by its reader; and, on my friend's expressing herself greatly obliged, he insisted on her accepting the volume. He continued the same Sunday service while he remained on board; interrupted once only, I think, by his taking a fever. During his illness, my kind aunt was indulged by being enabled to make some return for his politeness, in shewing the attention he stood much in need of, and for which he expressed himself not a little obliged.

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My feeling friend was much affected by finding, on her arrival in London, that she came too late to see her dear old minister, the reverend, the venerable John Wesley, who had been called to his great reward in March. She had mourned most truly for his brother, but flattered herself once again to be affectionately welcomed by this other eminent minister of Christ, who had not suffered difference of opinion on minor points to abate his regard for her. She also found ten years had swept away many with whom she had been more or less accustomed to take sweet counsel; she felt the deprivation, saw that almost all were new faces, and too soon discovered they were likely to remain so. After residing twelve months in Bristol, with a sister of Mr. Gilbert's, to whom my dear aunt was much attached, we removed to London, in 1792. Her health, always delicate, was not improved, nor were her trials ended.—The temporal affairs, which she was taught to believe nearly settled, were kept three years longer in suspense; and some people in Antigua forgot they owed any thing to one, whose attorney most strangely *advertised them* she had desired they might not be compelled by law to remember it. In all this, however, she looked to the strong for strength, found it proportioned to her day, and was enabled to raise many Ebenezers.

In 1794 she was twice severely ill; from the last illness, which occurred in a Siberian winter, she was raised by miracle; and as soon as possible she resumed the custom of braving all weathers, to attend the means of grace, which she always found sweet and refreshing. Again, in December, 1802, my dearest aunt was shaken over the grave; but by the blessing of God on the skill, and unremitting care and attention of a young medical relation of her late husband, I once more hailed my second mother's return from the borders of the grave. In

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this *torturing affliction she triumphed*, and praised Him who saw good thus to refine her, while torn almost to pieces by spasms that *appeared at the heart*. A dear pious sister, not allowed to share my late dreadful trial, for the ocean now rolls between us, said, she thought she could never forget the scene then exhibited, or the testimony borne to Almighty grace, power, and influence. But my dear aunt shall speak for herself. After briefly noticing her complaint, she says, "I rose no more from my bed for eleven weeks, and then was unable to stand, so that my confinement continued several weeks longer; and the influenza, which at that time raged every where, attacking me in my extreme weak state, protracted my recovery. During all this period I suffered greatly, and was brought very near the grave; but with God all things are possible. He spread beneath the everlasting arms, and my weak frame, and seventy years, were no obstruction to his healing and supporting power. In this illness I had various experience. At the beginning, and during its greatest violence, my soul was in a sweet state, and I had such clear views of Divine Truth, that faith seemed almost changed to demonstration.—Oh! that I might never forget that instructive season, but ever walk in the light, till the precious blood of Christ my Lord, has cleansed me from all unrighteousness. But, alas! with returning health those delightful evidences become obscured; a deep consciousness of sin, with painful doubts and fears, like a wild deluge, flow into my heart, weigh down my spirit, and oppress me sore; but, through grace, I cry the more earnestly to Him upon whom help is laid, and who is able to save to the uttermost all that call unto him."

My aunt finding her lodgings near Great Queen-street very disagreeable on several accounts, I was happy enough immediately to secure her

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apartments in Gloucester-street; and every thing being set to rights we removed to them, though she had to be conveyed in a sedan, and was almost fainting in the way. It was not till the 11th of May, she was able to go out even in a coach; and on the 29th (Whitsunday,) she thanked God for being again permitted to tread his courts, and to partake the blessings of his house in Queen-street chapel. On that occasion, the Rev. Dr. Coke preached a very animated sermon upon After that ye believed, ye received the Holy Spirit of promise," &c. Afterwards, she adds, "He was very lively and encouraging at the Sacrament, of which through mercy I was a partaker." She continued to walk in all the ordinances of the law, blameless in every eye, but her own; tried by losses and crosses of various sorts, some of which were of a nature peculiarly calculated to wound such a spirit as hers. Her house was stript, one Sunday evening, of articles worth much more than fifty pounds; her own servant most clearly let in the thieves, and, no doubt, shared with them! This young woman succeeded the faithful domestic who had married from her, only a few weeks before. Her appearance was greatly in her favour, her character so excellent, as to subject those who gave it to a prosecution; and, her dear mistress was severely wounded on her account; felt much for this youthful culprit, who, we then learned, was treading in more than one path of sin. After saying all she could to make some impression on her mind, and drawing a few tears, but no acknowledgment of guilt from her, my forbearing, forgiving friend dismissed her.

She had rescued two girls from absolute starving; taught them to read; pointed their path to heaven; and, with pleasure, looked for some fruit of her labour. But alas! the eldest, on whom she bestowed a good trade, and who had a pleas-

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ing exterior, *chose the path of sin*; and in spite of the tears, exhortations, and hand of her benefactress, tendered to save her, *persevered in it*, and *proved no ordinary sinner*. For the other, my benevolent friend risked the safety of her house, by receiving her back, after she had left it for a nest of thieves; but found her reward in this unpromising young creature's turning out, at last, a creditable, though poor member of society.

At Midsummer, 1811, my aunt removed to Winchester-Row, Paddington; immediately secured seats in Hinde-Street chapel; and as soon as they could be had, in Bentick chapel also; its nearness to a gospel ministry being one great inducement to taking her last house built with hands. Here my *much-loved, long-tried* friend appeared to be most wonderfully recruited: the air, the situation, change of place, and scene, all concurring to renovate her; and, with delight, I looked forward to still longer retaining a blessing I could not bear the thought of losing. Our walks were pleasant, and very frequently taken; the distance from Hinde-street, though felt, was not regarded. The church-yard of Paddington was often resorted to; and the scholar that would not relish, and at least *wished to improve*, by the observations she there made, and the reflections inspired by the solemn scene around, must indeed have been an "enemy to all righteousness." To her the neighbouring green also was *moral* ground, was interesting. Here in youthful days she walked, or rested under its venerable trees, while her little daughter sported on the grass-plat before her; here too, alone, she, at times, indulged the tear, for that sweet infant's loss. Under, what appeared to her, the self-same shelter from the heat, we sat conversing, while time with me flew unheeded. But, alas! these enjoyments were too soon

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clouded by the flagging of my venerated aunt's health.

Sept. the 21st, of the same year, she writes, "I have passed a week of great indisposition, and am brought low; every faculty impaired; and, with respect to my immortal part, it suffers and sympathises with its enfeebled companion; is weak and contracted, and, sometimes, supine and wandering; and yet, I trust, that I can say, 'My heart, O God, is fixed.' I feel that after all I have known, believed, and suffered, there is nothing in me, or that ever proceeded from me, but what would condemn me before the throne of God; and that in myself I am a ruined sinner, have not one ray of hope in myself; but, under this painful self-abasing view, I cast myself on the atoning Lamb. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* I have such enlarged views of the efficacy of his atonement, and precious blood-shedding, that I really think it is sufficient for the sins of *worlds on worlds*, if such there be, and if lost as ours. Lord, increase my faith and let it never, never fail; let me die in the true faith and fear of my Lord Jesus, who is, at this moment, precious to my soul. My desire is to be dissolved, that I may see my Saviour God as he is, and never hear of dryness or distance more.

'In life, He will my strength supply,
Proportion'd to the day;
At death, I still shall find him nigh
To wipe my tears away.'"

Conformably to the sentiments here expressed, she often ventured in worse weather, and much farther, than any regard to health would justify, to attend means of grace. On the 19th of April, 1812, she went to Hinde-street in the morning, to hear Mr. Reece; and finding Dr. Clarke was to preach in the evening, she attended the second

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time, but was sensibly affected by it, though she felt it good to be there. On such occasions she *would* deny herself the ease of a coach, but angels know, nay! *the God of angels* knows, much more than what that indulgence would have cost, she frequently gave to a poor creature met in the way—gave with a look of kindness—a tear of sympathy—and an exhortation to seek the favour of Him who can, who will wipe all tears from every eye that is raised in faith and patience to his mercy-seat!

On the 23d of the next August, she went to Hinde-street chapel *for the last time*, and heard Dr. Clarke on, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," &c. &c. It was for the Charity School, and she says, "Glory be to God, for the many useful plans, at this time on foot, for the benefit of the rising and future generations; and I praise him, that my heart rejoices in all the good that is done."

The 24th, just as we were retiring for the night, my maternal friend was seized with a sudden strange sensation in the left hand; immediate numbness in that arm, and in her left leg ensued; with much difficulty she was got up stairs; a fever soon came on; she became very weak; and it was but too plainly a paralytic affection, though not so dreadfully violent as some are. Her speech was little more than momentarily altered, and her intellects remained as unclouded as when her discerning and delighted husband, almost fifty years before, pronounced his merited eulogium on her! She was recovered so far on the 27th, as to be enabled to get up the next day. On the 29th, she had an attack of the gout in the weakened foot, which her medical attendant deemed a happy circumstance; and on the 6th of September, once more she got down stairs. But my dear friend, who rose the 24th of August active to a degree almost unparal-

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leled at her time of life, never, from that sad night, recovered strength in her left side—*never was able to move, but to a very short distance, without a crutch*—Perhaps, this was one of the greatest deprivations she could have suffered; but, like Job, she was silent, because it was her heavenly Father who afflicted her. Like him too, she would say, with tears, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Some years before this trial, I heard her frequently declare, if an angel appeared, and *could* assure her, her affliction would be removed in answer to fervent heartfelt prayer; but, that the Almighty hearer *would rather it should continue*, she would *prefer its remaining. She did not now shrink from this implicit resignation.*

From the beginning to the termination of this languishment, sleepless nights were generally added to days of weakness and suffering; and I often wondered how exhausted nature held out; but much oftener had cause to admire her unwearied patience! When I said, "my *dear aunt*, you give thanks where others would complain," she would reply, at times with tears of gratitude, "if *I* did not give thanks and praise God, the very stones might cry out;" and then enumerate her every mercy; among the rest, she frequently counted, being in a good measure kept from more pain, than what usually attends great debility. On the 16th of this suffering month, she says, "The past night I have, through mercy, enjoyed the sweetest repose in sleep, that I ever experienced in all my life; and this comfort was crowned with a delightful meditation, when I awoke, on the heavenly state, and with such views of the blessedness of dwelling for ever in the divine presence, and uniting in the high praises of God and the Lamb, that can never be fully expressed; but which, in the retrospect, cheered my drooping mind several

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times in the course of the day." Again, on the 26th, she says, "I had some sweet refreshing rest in the night; and, in calling upon God in prayer this morning, I felt a divine confidence, by which my soul was encouraged and refreshed. 'Oh! would He more of heaven bestow,' I do think that these divine consolations would even invigorate decaying nature." The next day she writes, "The Lord *does* mingle mercies in the cup, and permits his poor dust to look up to him that is able to save; and this morning I was encouraged, by an almost immediate answer to a petition that I addressed to the throne. I am not able, as yet, to attend public worship. In due season, when sovereign Wisdom wills, I trust, that, all unworthy as I am, I shall be permitted to join the general assembly and church of the first-born, and enjoy a sabbath that shall have no intervals; that emphatic *rest* that can no where else be found." Oh! how speedily was this expectation fulfilled!—Cold weather soon conspired with extreme weakness to keep her a prisoner, and prevent her enjoying the much-loved, highly-valued privilege, of attending the means of grace in public; but her bible was her daily, almost hourly solace. On the 25th of December, she said, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, for this is a day to be remembered through all generations; a day set apart to commemorate that sacred mystery of divine love, which the very angels desire to look into, and cannot fully comprehend. It exceeds their vast capacities, for it is infinite; it is the Love of God. My soul, now in this declining state, this near approaching period of its earthly pilgrimage, rests on this basis. Lord, increase my faith, and fit me for the skies.

'Tis good at thy word to be here,
'Tis better in thee to be gone;
And see thee in glory appear,
And rise to a share of thy throne.'

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"I am not able to meet with the Lord's people; but am united, I trust, in spirit, with all the saints of the Most High; and, I hope that, long ere this festival is kept here again, I shall be admitted to worship in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Thus did the God she adored with heartfelt fervor, give at times "his beloved sleep"—thus allow her to drink of the brook by the way.

After what has preceded, it will, perhaps, be unnecessary to add, that, notwithstanding these consolations, she trod the path, *dwelt in the Valley, of Humility.* Her bright visions were at times obscured; and, the excess of this grace, produced painful consequences to its dear possessor.

I might have observed before, that ever since our arrival in England, we had reason—family reason, to exclaim, "How populous, how vital is the grave!" Numbers falling victims to the last enemy. Of these, some were in the morning, *the dawn of life*—with others the almond-tree flourished. The lives, as well as deaths of a majority, furnished more than hope. Several were closely linked to the affectionate heart of my beloved aunt, who, in some cases, was disappointed in being the surviver. On the 13th of November, and 15th of December, 1798, she lost her only surviving sister and brother, the former, after a long and painful illness, the latter suddenly summoned into a world of spirits; but both well prepared for the important change, and many years her seniors. In 1802, she tenderly participated in the deprivation I sustained, by the death of my youngest brother; who, on December the 4th, the year preceeding, was cut off, in the West Indies, in the 26th year of his age; but had remembered his Creator in the days of extreme youth; had, we doubted not, exchanged earth for heaven. On the 18th of November, 1807, she was called

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to resign the revered Nathaniel Gilbert, whom she had known from his birth; he having been under Mr. Gilbert's and her care, when in England, for education; and was always regarded and lamented as a son. These were a dear, but small part of the number lost. On the 18th of February, 1813; we were informed of an approaching trial, which is thus noticed by my much-loved friend; "I might say, changes and war are against me, at least it appears that I shall not fail to experience this lot, till my last change come. The time seems very near approaching, when I shall bid adieu to all my friends below; but, near as is this separation, it appears that they will leave me first, by going back to the West Indies. My heart felt much, on the first intimation of such an event; but I trust that calm resignation will take place. May they be under the divine guidance and protection at all times, and in every place; and when they have finished their course upon earth, may we all meet where change shall be no more." On the 14th of May, she says—"This day, I have, in all human probability, bid a long, a last adieu to very dear friends, who are near to my heart. It has cost me much, my tottering frame can scarce abide the shock; but, through mercy, we may meet before a throne of grace, while in the vale we stay; and, I trust that we shall, by blessed experience find, that

'Present we still in spirit are,
And intimately nigh;
While on the wings of faith and prayer,
We each to other fly.'"

Her tears, and violent agitation, proved most powerfully, on this leave-taking; that her feelings were as keen, and unimpaired, as in youth and alarmed me greatly, for the consequences that might result to her frail frame: these were, however, providentially averted.—The parting has been final on

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earth—as she too truly predicted; for my dear sisters, and this kind friend, met no more in the body.

I have already observed, that my valued aunt was warmly attached to the Church of England; but she was still more so to the cause of Christ; and, therefore, rejoiced whenever his standard was erected, let the bearers be called by whatever names they might choose, or malice might give them. Agreeably to this, she saw with pleasure Paddington chapel built, satisfied that those, who obeyed the doctrine there inculcated, though not made members of the Church of England, would be Christians; and well aware that in the great day, Calvinists, and Arminians, Church-men, Methodists, Independents, Baptists, Quakers, &c. names given, will be merged in two only—Friends and Enemies of Jesus—must stand, or fall, as they come under one or other of these denominations. The newly erected chapel, was within a few doors of her pleasant airy habitation, and being also on the same side the way, saved the fatigue and exertion, I might say peril, of crossing the road. There then, after more than twelve months tedious, though patiently-borne confinement, my pious, truly *catholic*, friend; was enabled to attend the 26th of September, 1813; and writes thus:—"Through the great mercy of God, I have had the privilege of going once more into a place of divine worship. A new chapel, just built, very near my house, appropriated to the Independents, and where several very excellent preachers of the gospel are appointed to officiate, proves a great convenience to me, in my weak state; for, though I still greatly prefer the forms and institutions of the Church of England, yet I love, and can cordially unite with all that love and preach the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. The Rev. Mr. Liefchild preached a very fine sermon, upon the

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1st ver. of the 1st chap. of the 2d Epistle of Peter." The next year, she was once more allowed to enter Bentick chapel, and enjoyed the loved privilege of receiving the Sacrament. In the evening, she heard the Rev. Henry Townley at Paddington chapel.

Never, from the first of her long confinement, would she, except *extremely ill*, suffer me to stay at home on Sunday mornings on her account. The evenings she permitted me to devote to her: if they were not profitable as well as pleasant opportunities to me, I shall have much to answer for. Her Journal shows the high value she set on her Sunday meditations, when left to commune with her God in secret, and deprived of the comfort of attending his house; and gives an account of the intercourse, and answers to prayer with which she was indulged, while on her kness before the throne of grace. When allowed once more to enjoy the privilege of waiting on God in public, her doing so was frequently interrupted, by her losing the *little* ground I was too prone to flatter myself she had gained, as to her bodily health.

At first getting abroad, she could with the help of her stick, and leaning on my arm, take the air for a very short distance; but this soon becoming irksome and fatiguing, was given up, and her walks limited to the garden and fore-court. If I had not lately found so much greater cause to wonder at myself, and exclaim, "I am mystery all," I should still feel astonished at being able to bear the sight of a dearly beloved friend, who *used to walk* with the ease and activity of twenty-five, reduced to such feebleness as rendered it painful to move, though she would do so more than I would have had her, or almost any other in like circumstances would have attempted. In the beginning of the year 1814, the severity of the weather long rendered it impossible for her to get out at all.

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On the 24th of September, 1814, the remaining activity alluded to, was the means of her getting a sad fall when left a few minutes alone. She cut her leg against the post of the bedstead, and bruised the ancle dreadfully.

Such was the effect of this new affliction, added to her former complaints, that she could not get even into the parlour before the 7th of November. Sometimes my invaluable aunt increased my hopes by transient revivals, but, I doubt not, evidently declined the whole of 1815—evidently to all but poor infatuated me; for she was frequently confined for three or four weeks to her room; and, at last, with shorter intervals, between each attack. She spoke to me, at times, of the great release she had in view, but as she told me, when *Hope was fled*, had spared me! I found afterwards that she often assured friends who visited her, that she *saw nothing but the grave before her*, and expected a speedy summons.

On the 4th of June, she went for the *last time* into a place of worship, but was almost overcome by the exertion. It being Sacrament Sunday, the service began at half past ten o'clock, and it struck two before we left the chapel, so that it was almost four hours long; and I was *seriously alarmed* on our way back, as my dear aunt appeared ready to die in the street, and had refused the assistance of a sedan. The 7th of November she referred to the *last said ceremony*, and I learned had some days before taken advantage of one of my short absences from home to provide in a measure for it. She rose the 19th with difficulty, and as soon as seated by the fire-side, enumerated all her mercies with her usual thankfulness, adding, "I hope soon to hear, and join the song of angels."

On the 28th she was much fatigued by going down stairs to execute a deed for appointing new Trustees to the Methodist Chapel in Antigua; the

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application for which called to her mind the forgotten circumstance of her being one of those chosen when it was built; and now almost the only surviver. The last Christmas-day my dear friend was permitted to spend with me, she says, "Oh that I may set out as afresh for the kingdom! and though my outward frame decay, and droop, and die, yet may my spiritual vigour increase more and more; so that whether next Christmas be celebrated by me in heaven above, or earth below, I may inherit the real blessings that my Lord hath procured for his people, by his manifestation in the flesh. Amen, and Amen." She hails the first day of the year of her release thus; "Praise the Lord, O! my soul, for his long-suffering goodness, and tender mercy in Christ Jesus, whereby my life is thus protracted, and that I this morning experienced his divine and sacred influence on my soul. May this ensuing year, or whatsoever portion of it may revolve over me, be spent to the glory of God, whether in life or in death. Oh that I may watch, and be as one sensible how short my time must now assuredly be, according to the course of decaying nature. If my gracious God would smile upon me as he did this day at early dawn, I could gladly clap my wings and soar away." On the 12th, she writes, "I had sweet and inexplicable experience in my earliest addresses to the throne of grace; whereby my soul was much refreshed and encouraged. Truly a stranger intermedleth not with the Christian's joy, nor can it be understood, till it be imparted to the believing soul, by the blessed and Holy Spirit of God."

The 14th, (Sunday) she says, "Glory be to God, that teaches me to value this consecrated day. Its privileges are sweet to my soul. I love to bow before the throne, and to read the word of God, and thus to spend a few retired, precious

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hours; but I sensibly experience increasing weakness pervade all my powers. I totter as I walk, and my poor hands almost forget their cunning, and tremble with exertion; my hearing is dull, and my sight weak; thus I verge to dissolution. What shall I render to the God of my salvation, who, in this enfeebled state, enables me to look with comfort on a just opening grave; or rather to look beyond it with holy hope, and sweet expectation of joys to come? 'There my exalted Saviour stands!'"

On the 23d of February, my dear pious Aunt copied for her highly honoured companion, a profession of faith written by herself in 1771, and which I insert here, with both dates, exactly as it lies before me.

"*May* 25, 1771.

"Being much indisposed in body, and knowing not how soon I may experience that awful change, for which, resigned through grace, I wait, I am particularly desirous to search into my own heart, and to examine my evidences for a blessed eternity. I must acknowledge, that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and, that I hope, I shall dwell in the courts of the Lord for ever; that when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, I shall be admitted into a mansion eternal in the heavens, see my Saviour as he *is*, and be transformed into his image from glory to glory. These hopes I build entirely upon the merits and death of Jesus Christ my Lord; renouncing myself altogether, as the chief of sinners, as unworthy, unfaithful, unprofitable, and hell-deserving. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest what thy grace has wrought in me, whereby I do possess a lively hope of eternal life, which supports me above the menaces of the king of terrors. I dare go forth to meet him in thy name, making mention of thy righteousness, and

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of thine only. I believe that through thee I shall find him a vanquished foe, yea a friendly messenger, to convey my longing, fluttering spirit, from a world of sad vicissitude and woe, to the peaceful realms of everlasting life. Glory be to thee, O Lord, that ever thou didst give thy Holy Spirit to be unto my soul a spirit of bondage unto fear; and that now I know, and have long known, by the same Spirit, that my Redeemer liveth, and am enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Glory be to God, for imparting that faith to my soul, which renders the Lord Jesus Christ inexpressibly precious, the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. By the same light, I discover my own baseness, vileness, poverty, wretchedness, and nothingness. I loathe myself as in dust and ashes. I think my life is all a blot. O! shall I have a name among the living in Jerusalem! Stand astonished, O ye heavens! and ye, my surviving friends upon earth, be amazed and overcome by such love as this; let it constrain you to trust, to love, to adore, to praise, and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and lover of souls. Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of hosts! My life is hid with thee, in God, and when thou shalt appear, then shall I appear with thee in glory.

"MARY GILBERT."

"This faith is built upon an impregnable Rock, and, therefore, however assaulted, cannot fail. The foundation standeth sure."

1816.—The following, without date, seems a counterpart to the above; and, perhaps, is best placed here. I believe it written in a former illness.

"By the frequent severe attacks of monitory pain, I am led to expect approaching dissolution. Soon shall the dust return to its native earth, and my place know me no more. I shall be brought to the grave, and remain in the tomb, and the

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clods of the valley shall be sweet unto me.—I shall lie down, and not arise till the heavens are no more. I shall be freed from the tumults of life, its cares shall not hold mine eyes waking, nor disturb that latest repose. And now, Lord, what is mine hope? Truly my hope is in thee. I have experienced the vanity of all things here below. Nothing is permanent on this rolling orb; all things are full of labour, and subject to perpetual vicissitude. But thou art the same, and thy mercy endureth for ever. Thy truth standeth like the great mountain. Thou art the God that keepest mercy and covenant to a thousand generations. Great is thy faithfulness. Thou hast made and redeemed me, and thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands, to the dear purchase of thy blood. Thou hast been my invariable friend in life; I have been left unto thee ever since I was born, and have found thee an all-sufficient God. I cannot believe that, like the creature, thou wilt forsake me in my greatest emergency; but that thou wilt be with me in nature's latest conflict; and after death, though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: yea, I shall see him for myself, mine eyes shall behold him, and not another. I shall fall at his feet, I shall cast my crown before him, and, oh! what heights of rapture shall I enjoy, when Jesus appears upon his great white throne, in all the majesty and glory which he had before he spake the world from nought, and bid the innumerable race of beings *be*. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly!

"MARY GILBERT."

As the dear writer of the above pieces drew nearer her Father's house, her sufferings of various sorts increased. *Whole nights of watching*, sometimes accompanied by faintness, and at others by weakness, that promised speedy release, were mul-

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tiplied to her; and if revived by a night's rest, once in ten or twelve, it seemed only to enable her to hold out all the weary days appointed, till her change came. "Tir'd Nature's sweet restorer, balmly sleep," so forsook her, as to be termed, "a treasure," by the patient sufferer. At this time also, two months preceding her death, a new affliction was added to those already so long endured—a strange nervous irritation, which occasioned a terrible stinging sensation all over, without the smallest cause for it appearing. This had such distressing effects, as, in a great measure, to deprive her of the solace till then found in writing, reading, and being read to! It was at intervals, more or less violent, and persecuted the departing saint even to death—*I really fear to the last moment!* She had from the first few days, after the commencement of her illness in 1812, constantly refused all medical aid, declaring she did so conscientiously, and from principle, aware that no one has a right to throw away life—assured no one could renovate her, and that the *smallest error* in her case must be fatal: often adding, "and how sweet will it be to be healed by my heavenly Father—by the great physician, without any means at all." She still adhered to the same resolution, and still, as far as possible, "promised hope," by bidding sickness wear a smile—a smile of anticipated heaven! She always possessed a vein of wit and humour, *guarded by religion, checked by humility, and controlled by feeling:* this even now, at times, broke through the gloom of long languishment, and great suffering, illumined her conversation; and might, in part, be the reason, *if reason had any thing to do with it*, of my being, in a great measure, blind to our near approaching separation; to her it was evident; her Journal proves she saw its rapid advance—Death was with her a daily expected visitor.

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"Her thought went forth to meet him on his way,
"Nor Piety regretted it must die."

Her mental strength remained in full vigour.—She had not *slumbered through life;* she was always, and remained now, exquisitely alive to every thing—felt in full force! Her body, however, could not second its never-dying companion. The following brief notice is all that was taken of the *last birth-day* she saw on earth; the next will be kept,

"Where human cares and pains are o'er,
"And birth-day suns shall beam no more."

"Wednesday, March 6th.—This (being leap-year) is the anniversary of my birth, having now through the mercy of a long-suffering God, accomplished my 83d year. I am now experiencing great decay and extreme weakness; but, through the abounding grace of God, I am not fallen from my faith and hope in Jesus Christ, my Lord, whose is the earth and the fulness thereof, and who is able to save to the utmost."

A friend, who called to see her on the 22d, told me afterwards, "she appeared already etherial—body and mind well suited!" She might have added, "*Patience and resignation personified.*"—The 31st my friend's Journal *concludes* thus, "My nervous irritation continues to distress me, and I am very low, not able to read with my usual attention, or to perform my religious exercises with recollection; but the Lord enables me to offer up my desires in short ejaculations from the heart; and it is my most earnest desire to lie in his hands as the passive clay; O that he may make me a vessel unto honour! Amen."

But now I approach a scene where I ought to drop pallet and pencil—which "angels should paint!" Yet, impelled by a resolution, my invaluable aunt shall not sink to the grave, without

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some memorial of her *immortal worth*, I am induced to attempt it; though I must be compelled, in a measure, to copy the example of him who drew a veil over the countenance he despaired of pourtraying.—The fatal month of April rose threatening! The afternoon of the 1st, my dear patient was most alarmingly ill. Her *peculiarly delicate tabernacle* was undermining rapidly—its *seraphic prisoner* almost emancipated! The next day she was *very low*, and had a sad fit of irritation at bed-time; got little sleep that night; had another severe attack of irritation after breakfast next day; and could not obtain any sleep after dinner. She past a very languid afternoon, and said once, with much kindness, "*I love your company, but can hardly speak.*" In the evening my inestimable aunt, leaning over the arm of her easy chair, and resting her head on my shoulder, affectionately mentioned many absent friends, sweetly adding, "I believe *I never approach the throne without remembering your dear sisters!* Your dear brother and his wife too are not forgotten!" Oh! that my *sieve-like* memory, could retain what I may well call a fine summary of faith and thanksgiving united!—but *I felt at the time I could not*—the scales of infatuation and delusion were fast falling from my eyes, and I beheld my *thirty years friend*, nearly expiring in my arms! She began with thanks to "Him who had early called and enabled her to embrace his gospel;" and afterwards repeated,

"High thron'd on heaven's eternal hill,
In number, weight, and measure still,
Thou sweetly order'st all that is:
And yet Thou deign'st to come to me,
And guide my steps, that I with Thee
Enthron'd, may reign in endless bliss."

Then, with *peculiar feeling* and *self-application*, she went through the whole of these expressive lines, which your readers, who have not seen

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them, will, I think, thank me for inserting at length.

" Thou art my God, sole object of my love!
Not for the hope of endless joys above:
Not for the fear of endless pains below,
Which they who love thee not must undergo!

For me, and such as me, thou deign'st to bear
An ignominious cross—the nails—the spear!
A thorny crown transpierced thy sacred brow,
While bloody sweats from every member flow!

For me, in tortures thou resign'd'st thy breath,
Embrac'd me on the cross, and sav'd me by thy death!

And can those suff'rings fail my heart to move!
What but thyself can now deserve my love?

Such as then was, and is thy love to me,
Such is, and shall be still my love to thee!
To thee, Redeemer! Mercy's sacred spring,
My God, my Father, Maker, and my King!"

The rest of the evening passed in a similar manner. Before supper, I read, at her request, the sixth of St. John's gospel; and my sad heart was once more a *little cheered* by some favourable appearances at bed-time. My beloved friend sought rest at ten o'clock, found it sweetly for about an hour; but awoke *deadly cold*, in *violent pain*, and extreme nervous agitation! Here I always date a material alteration for the worse. It was dreadful, and lasted long, in spite of every effort to remove it, but ended in another short sleep; and she afterwards appeared so much refreshed and easy, that my folly led me to believe it nervous only! She afterwards got much good sleep, but awoke very weak on the 4th. While rising, she said to me with a *faint*, *kind*, I might have heard, *dying voice*, "I am *trying* to come to breakfast with you!" Alas! alas! it was the last refreshment of this sort we partook at the same

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table. She passed a poor day. In the course of the evening she gave thanks for her "many mercies—*eye-sight, senses, a kind friend, and a quiet place;*" expressed her reliance on the merits of Christ, as her *sole hope* and support for future happiness; hoped the enemy would never be allowed to gain any advantage over her, and was most kind and careful for her, who must through life feel her loss irreparable. Intending to get soon to bed, my dear aunt prepared earlier than usual for it, and seemed revived; but was suddenly seized with such dreadful agitation, something so indescribably alarming, that it far exceeded the past night's paroxysm. She cried, "Get me to bed, get me to bed, and I shall be better." This was a task of no small difficulty, for always eager to attend to her myself, and flattered by her "wish to have no one else, if it might be without injuring me," I had refused all other assistance, and stood both dire assaults with only that of a handy active young servant, who, herself being frightened, was less able to aid her bewildered companion. The easy chair, however, befriended us, and we got the tortured creature into bed—a bed from which she rose no more. The fiery trial lasted long after, and ended as the former night in sleep, though not so refreshing: the remaining hours afforded more, for which the pious sufferer, was, according to her *never-failing* habit, very thankful; but unable to rise the next day, being low and drowsy. In the afternoon I read to her the 3d, 10th, 11th, and 14th of St. John. She was low and exhausted all the evening; but she did not suffer from a return of the nervous irritation, till long after the hour it had occurred the preceding evening. The next morning we agreed in thinking her a little better. Her appetite had totally failed many days before; but on this morning she *attempted* to eat a little breakfast; and from that day she existed on liquids

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only; for the apparent amendment, which was such as made her feel as if all her complaints were leaving her, was transient indeed. Phlegm, irritation, and soreness in the throat, conspiring to distress her, the former rising in the course of the day to a very alarming degree, afforded a reason why I should no longer refuse to let some one share my "Sad post of observation, which grew darker every hour." The next day, (Sunday) I was so far frightened into compliance, as partly to assent to informing a friend, who had proffered her services, of my dear aunt's situation: and without knowing this, she said to me a little after, "I think you must let Mrs. C. come—she may take it ill if you do not;" and alluding to her wish of being, *if possible*, left to me only, I repeated, I did not mean to resign her for a moment longer than I could help, to any created being. The friend thus allotted to be my companion in this season of suffering, was one who had enjoyed the privilege of being under the sole care of my dear aunt, from the tender age of six to nineteen; and, though many years had intervened, she retained a grateful sense of her kindness and affection for her.

In the year 1814, the name on the fore-court-gate, providentially induced the Rev. John Bishop to call in; and from that period, as far as his time permitted, he made up the deficiences of others, did so with that unassuming kindness, which so greatly endears a Christian minister. At her request this gentleman attended to give the sacrament, the afternoon of this sorrowful Sunday; two of her nieces, a nephew, and myself partaking of the doubly solemn ordinance: her weakness appeared such, as to render it next to impossible that she could hold out many hours! She remained in the same sad state till the evening of Tuesday, when she appeared most wonderfully revived, and exerted herself to a degree that surprised those attending her, without its seeming to be what is

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I think generally termed, "a lightening before death!" Hope once again trembled back into my oppressed heart, and I went exultingly, and I trust, gratefully, to return thanks for a boon I too soon found was not granted! As far as the tormenting complaints I have mentioned, permitted, she appeared next day to "languish into life;" but sunk so fast, on Thursday the 11th, that I answered the inquiries sent by a friend, with the one emphatic, awful word, "*dying!*"—She, however, revived a little in the evening. While I was rubbing her arms with lavender, to allay nervous irritation, she looked at them, and said, "When this began, I might have known that death was the end of it; *but this is not death yet, for that is cold, and I am not cold!* Do you not wonder I am kept so long?"

She was from the first, careful for the ease and comfort of all about her, inquiring what refreshment they took, and affectionately solicitous for me; and this in the midst of much suffering, at times almost choked with phlegm, and hardly able to swallow the little liquid she took; too soon rendered more necessary by increasing thirst, and an accession of fever. But all was so sweetly, so patiently borne, that a pious young friend standing earnestly looking at her, turned to me, and with animation cried, "*Is it not delightful? Do you not envy her?*" The next evening (Good Friday) while I again attempted to mitigate her suffering, my almost beatified friend said, "As to my religious experience, my dear, I cannot say I have such a measure of those sweet consolations and divine manifestations as I have been blessed with in former illnesses; *but I can say, I have lived, and am dying, in the faith and love of Jesus!*" Frequently during these days of suffering, her lips were employed in expatiating on the goodness of the Almighty, as "a *promise-keeping, mercy-loving, soul-saving God;*" and when urged not to

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exhaust herself, she was wont to reply, "*I must tell of the goodness of God;*" or "I must speak of my Saviour." One evening, feeling perhaps some variation, and less spiritual comfort than usual, she said, "I may with Mr. Charles Wesley, cry,

"Oh! could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity!"

Adding, "Dear, good, excellent man! a great, a chief disciple of his Lord and master!"—Seeing her sinking very low one morning, I said, "Oh! my loved aunt! I may say, I fear, the pearly gates are opening fast to receive you." She answered, with indescribable emphasis—"*Never, never did they receive one more unworthy!*" This was no new language; it was what I was accustomed to from her—it was that of the soul; for among this pious dear friend's graces, *humility* and *love* shone resplendent. Prayers, ejaculations, quotations from scripture, and hymns, expressed more or less audibly, employed her waking moments. She remembered and prayed for absent friends, particularly one who was once much valued by her, but who had most strangely, and without cause, five years before, commenced her enemy; entreating that all that was lacking might be supplied, and his labours abundantly blest. To me she said, "Oh! show your love to me, by not resenting for me." Of a kind young friend, neither allied by blood nor marriage, and who had never received any favour from her, except that of high and just esteem, she said, "Tell Mr. M. I have the strongest sense of his kindness, and gratitude for it. Tell him, I pray God to reward him, that all his blessings may be blessed; that I greatly admire his large heart, and bestowing hand—had I lived, I should have been happy to cultivate a friendship with him; but hope it will be consummated in heaven. And, O! tell him, I have lived and am dying in the firm belief and full assurance

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that the blood of Christ was shed for *all men*; that he is a kind and gracious Saviour, unwilling that any should perish; and ready at all times to receive and acccept the returning sinner. Tell him I hope he will ever retain this great truth; that all his changes will be happy: that he will enjoy a long, useful life; and living and dying be found in the true faith and love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sometimes she breathed from her dear parched lips these aspirations, "Come, my Lord! Come, my Saviour! Oh, come, and take me to thyself!" Once she said, "Renew me—protect me—accept me—receive me."

Thus suffering, bearing, praying, praising, forgiving, blessing, the days passed on, finding and leaving my inestimable friend fettered in a cottage of clay, a house of pain and sorrow. Thus arrived the 18th of April, on which night I think her (to me dreadful, but to her, in the end, joyful) change began, though not with the dire symptoms next morning brought with it. Her thirst was by this time distressing; she frequently called for water, and repeatedly exclaimed, thankfully, "Oh, delicious draughts!" These draughts were a wine glass full; and I could not help observing to her, that she would "Soon drink freely from a much sweeter, and an exhaustless fountain." That evening she asked for some oranges and apples, (the last two days she had lived on little except water) and it must have been a hard insensible heart indeed, that had not felt, when holding a piece of apple in her fingers, almost transparent from *whiteness* and *thinness* united, she thanked God for it; declaring, she "believed she had never eaten an apple without doing so, for it was one of her heavenly Father's good gifts to men." She afterwards feared she might be wrong in thus mitigating suffering, which Infinite Wisdom saw fit for her; and appeared conscious death was approach-

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ing!! I had been used to kind speeches, particularly in sickness, from my loved aunt; but a larger legacy—a richer treasure of *affectionate, tender* ones, could not, on a death-bed, have been bequeathed me by my *real mother!* They are *invaluable to me*—uninteresting to all but a few readers, whose hearts have a particular chord in them, which can vibrate to some peculiar touches. They are perhaps irrelevant here, and therefore I indulge in a few only; but the sweetness and fervour with which on this important night she said, "A glimpse of you—a glimpse of you! may God bless, abundantly enrich you with more and more of his grace, and amply compensate all your love to me," can never be fogotten till my hard heart shall cease to palpitate, and, probably, will be remembered, if re-united, as she prayed we might be, where "When we join, we cannot sever more!"

But I must pass on to a scene so exquisitely distressing, that it requires stronger nerves than I can furnish even to begin its delineation. When Death approached this child of God, this heir of glory, it was as a foe already vanquished by his Almighty Conqueror, by Him who had given her the victory! but, as if in revenge for lost influence over the soul, he exerted all his power to afflict the body; and from the first his harbingers were most painful, though the dear victim did not complain, or for one instant appear impatient! Gentle moanings told she suffered, and now and then she said, in a melting pathetic tone, "*Ah, no body knows! pain, pain! broken to pieces!*" and then feared she ought not to say even this!! After a night of suffering, my very dear aunt accepted, about six o'clock, a dish of tea I offered; and on taking it to her, I saw the long-expected, much-dreaded hour was actually arrived! In vain she attempted to use the spoon, her arm and hand were convulsed from the shoulder, and a flood of

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tears from the friend before alluded to, proved she saw and thought as I did; but my dry eyes refused to accompany her.

Believing my dear aunt very near her release, I instantly ordered, as they had requested, two of her nieces to be summoned—They came immediately, but not to witness her speedy dismission; on the contrary, to see her pass dying hours, till about three in the afternoon, when what the *dear* sufferer, herself, termed "a conflict" began, and lasted *about three hours*, so *beyond description dreadful*, that I must turn from it, for here indeed, "Memory barbs the darts of pain!"—But here—here, in such circumstances as these, unclouded sense remained, and piety predominated. When, seeing her terrible sufferings, and hearing her cry, "*Agonies! agonies!*" I exclaimed, "*I need all my callousness now;*" she replied, "*Call it divine support!*"—*Prayed fervently*, and at last sunk almost released! That never to be forgotten night, I accepted the friendly offers of one of the ascending saint's nieces; we watched together, and thought she was going fast; but, on the approach of morning, she seemed to acquire fresh strength to suffer; and, frightened at the possibility of another attack, similar to that of the past day, I frequently consulted the watch, *hardly conscious what I meant by it.* At one time, I really thought she would never speak again; but she lived out this day also, taking nothing but water, except two or three times when a little wine was mixed with it. Even in the midst of extreme anguish, she desired me to leave her; and the greatest mitigation she felt, was that of my rubbing her feet. The Saturday night was spent in suffering, and the fatal morning, of the 21st, was ushered in with conflicts, perhaps not inferior to those of Friday. She had more than once desired, when she was gone, we "would thank God, and rejoice." Soon after one of these requests, and a dire paroxysm, she said, "*I am going—I am*

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going—Farewell, my dear!" The term she honored me with, during the whole of her confinement to bed. I really believed that these were the last words I should ever hear her utter; but she roused from what, for a few minutes, looked like release; and begged if she "again went off in that way, there might be perfect stillness—not the least stir, lest it should recal her to life." Alas! alas! she returned to protracted anguish and fresh conflicts, remaining, more or less, convulsed all this memorable morning! I had, two or three days before, asked if I should send for Mr. Bishop, and she answered, "No—no man *now* can do me any good, but *he is an excellent man;* and I love and esteem him for his work's sake." She inquired this morning, if this Rev. Gentleman was come; and, on my replying he was not, adding, "shall I send for him," she said again, "No—but tell him, I beg an interest in his prayers." I assented, and was instantly struck with the thought, that he was then abroad on ministerial duty, and it seemed *impossible* that prayer would not, with her, be changed for praise, ere I should have an opportunity of complying with her request. I passed this solemn, awful morning, rubbing the feet of my *long*-tried much-loved friend; or applying lavender to her face. About noon, while thus employed, the enemy was allowed to throw a few parting shafts at her; and, while saying something of this to her two nieces, who approached the bed, and whose tears I envied, the thought struck me, and I reminded her of the excellent Mr. Throgmorton, who was so terribly tempted at the approach of death, as to ask an attending minister, "What he thought of a man dying without a conscious sense of the presence of God;" and was answered by him, "What think you of Christ dying on the cross, saying, 'My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?'—observing, it had broken the snare of satan, and rescued the dis-

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tressed inquirer. She replied, "It was a word in season." But that loved voice was altered, was hollow!—used with difficulty; and repetition, therefore, was impossible. But, though life was flying, her speech again returned. The few remaining moments were spent in prayer. Her mental powers remaining unimpaired to the last, within half an hour of her release, she called me, audibly, and reminded me of a promise given several days before. I saw the last breath quivering on her lips, and, therefore, was as brief as possible in my reply; and being urged to quit the side of her so much, so justly valued, I did so, and thus was prevented seeing *the very last pang*. The scene closed *at four o'clock, on Sunday afternoon, the 21st of April*, 1816.

The transporting joy which she possessed, left a heavenly smile upon her countenance, expressive of the strong consolation with which she was favoured in her last moments. I passed the preceding Sunday morning, in which she was borne from my sight here for ever, by her side—there spent part of a memorable birth day! And then could truly say,

> 'Not yet has Death's effacing fingers,
> Swept the lines, where *sweetness lingers*!'

Not yet does any thing more than sleep appear. To such a degree was this, that I regretted fixing the next morning for the sad ceremony; and felt inclined to postpone it; not bearing the idea of unnecessarily losing her. Ye, who turn from this as uninteresting and irrelevant—who feel it not, and cannot allow for what is unknown to you, throw aside the piece—disregard it, until you lose such a friend; and if such a time ever arrives, take it up again; and then tell me whether, or not, it is read with altered feelings.

On the 29th, the Rev. Mr. Bishop kindly attended, to accompany the remains of my dear aunt to

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Paddington church-yard, the place she had herself selected; whither they were borne, in a hearse followed by two coaches, conveying this minister and eight nephews and nieces of hers, and her late dear husband's; and I am gratified, and obliged, by hearing Mr. Bishop read the prayers, and performed the last solemn ceremony, in the *most feeling and impressive manner;* confident he might, without hesitation, declare he committed the dead body to parent earth, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life."

Thus then lived, and thus died; or rather, thus passed through time, and thus entered eternity, my inestimable, maternal aunt.

Thus have I attempted to sketch an outline, that would admit of much filling up—that has various defects, and greatly requires amendment; but, despairing of doing so, to any purpose, and hoping the *intention* will excuse the *execution,* I shall add a little more to illustrate the exalted character I have been bold enough to attempt pourtraying. In doing this, it certainly does not require a stroke of my pen to vouch that my sainted friend was orthodox, or to assert she filled up every relative duty—thousands are the one, and do the other, without coming near her in gifts and graces. It is probably more necessary to observe, many may regard much of what is contained in the preceding pages, as the effusions of partiality; but I am conscious that I have strictly attended to the truth, in all I have said of my dear aunt; and I am aware that in one instance I have said much too little. All that relates to her sufferings, for the last twenty-one days of life, and the close of all, is *cold, vapid, nerveless!* gives but a faint idea of unconquerable resignation and patience—of the endurance of one, who so completely repressed her *dying groans,* that those about her were not to the last distressed by more than short breathings, and gentle sighs! Groans were lost in

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prayer; for the ascending spirit's latest efforts were so employed.

The dear steady follower of her Lord told me, that at the commencement of her Christian course, she was much harrassed with painful ideas of what sort of death she should die, as it regarded her body, and that at length she surmounted them, by making a surrender of the whole to Him, who is the infinitely wise disposer of events; praying that he would choose for her the time, place, manner, and circumstances of her death, and complete resignation to his will. I vainly thought that this ensured her an easy dismission; her infantine weakness confirmed the expectation; and all that saw her, (without knowing her prayer,) believed her thread of life so finely spun, that it would be snapped gently and suddenly! She herself said, when on the verge of life, "I had hoped to die delightfully; but fear now, my manner of dying will frighten some of my friends; will make them dread death!" But infantine weakness, and almost choaking phlegm, (which tormented her, more or less, nearly to the last,) could not damp her zeal, for the best interest of those about her; and, on two different occasions, she most kindly exhorted and admonished the young servant before mentioned, whose tears and attention, to a mistress she had enjoyed the privilege of residing with more than three years, proved she was not, at the time at least, regardless; that the scene was not beheld with indifference. Leaving this, however, I pass on to touch upon particular doctrines; and must observe my now rejoicing friend, believed and loved *progressive holiness*; witnessed the truth of it to all who knew her, in her life and conversation. Arminians are charged with Pelagianism; if the charge is just, (which I am far from allowing,) my beloved aunt was no Arminian. No son or daughter of fallen Adam more fully renounced all confidence in self; more

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entirely relied on Christ, and *Christ alone*, for mercy and salvation than she; often, to the last, declaring, that were it not for his great atonement, which she was sure was sufficient for sins of the most crimson and scarlet dye, she should give up all hope. Well instructed in the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, she was so far from making light of death, that she felt it an awful thing to die, and to stand before a just and holy God; though, through the abounding grace bestowed on her, she could with humble confidence say, the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in the great day a crown of righteousness. But no one interested in the great, the important truth, more firmly believed, (Oh, glorious belief! Truth, more firm than the pillars of heaven,) that the blood of the second Adam, flowed for *all*—for every creature, that partook of the curse pronounced upon the first. According to this doctrine, the gospel is indeed glad tidings, "good will, towards men."

But this belief did not, for one moment, abate her esteem or love for those who held a different opinion. She heard them with pleasure and profit, well assured that they boast a noble phalanx, which would as readily rally round the Redeemer's standard, nor count their lives dear when hazarded in his service; and that they would travel by sea and land, to save one soul from perdition, as any of those who maintain a more consistent idea of Almighty love and mercy. So firmly does the writer believe the same, that she is frequently surprised their practice and experience do not convince themselves they are in error.—Can the servant be greater than his Master?—the disciple more merciful than his Lord!

In addition to what I have said, let me add, *if* to abridge self of indulgences advanced age and illness requires, in order to bestow more on others; *if* to sympathize with the woes of *all*, from a fellow-

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man to a worm; *if*, when you have done your utmost, you excuse the ingratitude and sin you suffer under; *if* to shed tears of compassion for a sinner, and as far as possible palliate, while you allow the offence, not for want of discernment, but with such a share of it as would almost warrant a claim to the discerning of spirits; *if* to act so as to avoid reward here, and only hope it hereafter, through the merits of Him who promises it; *if all this*, and much more, prove the doer a disciple of Him, who sanctioned feeling, and *sanctified tears* by shedding them at the grave of Lazarus, and over hardened obdurate Jerusalem, the author of this incorrect piece, *in the presence of an all-seeing God*, asserts the loved friend she mourns, *was a disciple*; too often repaid by coldness and indifference in the obliged.

I have thus declared my highly endowed friend possessed jewels of more value than all the Potosi's mines produce, for

'Are these not gems that shine resplendent far,
Bright *mental* gems, that dim the morning star?
More brilliant, rich, than all Peru can boast,
Golconda's purchase, or in ocean lost?'

Oh, Yes! and

'Though rough, as from their native bed,
With sterling worth will blaze;
But polish'd by the artist's skill,
Must dart superior rays!'

That skill appeared in her also, in manners, form, and feature; in ten thousand sweeteners of dear domestic life. Often have I thought that, while she would have graced a court, she would also adorn a cottage. If she retained, as a daughter of Adam, any failings, they were visible alone to those who can outgaze the eagle—few will envy the strength of their optic nerve.

I have frequently been much struck at the *retiring greatness*, the *unobstrusive humility*, of this

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loved aunt, who seemed as if she expected to *learn* from those she might have *taught!* Nor shall I ever forget the *manner* in which, not long before her flight to heaven, she set me *right in the pronunciation of a word!* When I exclaimed, "*Is it possible* you can thus apologize to *me?*" This must have been remarked by all that conversed with her, and it has been observed by more than one friend, that "one of her great charms was, every body thought more highly of her than she did of herself." Her zeal and love seemed to burn brighter as the lamp of life declined. Warm and energetic by *nature*, she was equally so in the best of causes by *grace;* often appearing ready to envy the Missionaries; declaring, was she a young man, she would offer as a candidate; and delighted with every account of the increase and spread of the Bible Societies. Her affectionate heart was tenderly attached to all her relatives and friends, *feeling too keenly for them;* and any proof of kindness, or semblance of the opposite, had full effect on her susceptible mind. Had she been less calculated to inspire affection, or awaken pride in her husband's family, her love for them must have branded them with ingratitude, had it not been at least in good measure returned. To be named *Gilbert*, was enough to attach her, and this dear name was too much valued, for the sake of him who bore it, to be even advantageously parted with—*this she proved.*

Such were the powers she possessed, that she could dive with the philosopher, soar with the divine, enjoy the sublime flights of the poet, and smile with the moralist, successfully skirmishing on the side of virtue! When reading to, or hearing me, a few luminous words cleared the obscurity of a passage, and fresh beauties were added to the author; and this when she was so weak as to deprive me of the privilege of hearing more than two or three sentences that struck her while occasionally perusing

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a volume. At different times, I have called and felt her, "my *best Bible commentator, confessor, monitress, adviser, instructress, valued, valuable, and honored companion!*" There were none of whose piety I thought so highly; none whose good opinion I so regarded; yet *none* to whom every secret of my soul was open! Sins, faults, and follies, which an inferior Christian would have heard with a frown of anger, or, *(it is possible)* a smile of contempt—a smile that thanks God, "I am not like this silly sinner," were heard by her with patience; and those guilty of them were treated by her as the spirits sent to minister to heirs of salvation, may be supposed to treat their charge, with angelic faithfulness and angelic kindness! *Oh, what have I not lost!* and how glorious the boast, how dear the reciprocity, when I add, this soaring friend sometimes said to her delighted companion, "*I tell you my very thoughts*;" at others, "you are a confessor *that absolves too easily*." We were the more closely united, by the absence of almost all our friends; for my loved aunt was in too weak a state to make new acquaintance, or entertain strangers; and therefore declined even the overtures of our kind neighbours, who, compassionating affliction, have renewed them *now* to me, proving themselves of the number of those who have soul enough to disregard ceremony, and sympathy sufficient to compel forgetfulness, that they are strangers.

After all I have said of my invaluable aunt's attainments, natural and acquired, it is still only *truth* to assert, she was not too wise for *domestic avocations*, nor too learned to enjoy *simple pleasures*—but her chemistry made them much more, for with her the works of nature always led to nature's God! The horse, the dog, the cat, answered this purpose; the poor, much-abused, ill-treated ass, was regarded with peculiar kindness and compassion—with renewed love and gratitude

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to Him, who put honour on this humble animal, by deigning to use it.—It never came in her way without receiving a pat or stroke; and in the numerous liberal things she desired and wished to execute, this despised outcast was not forgotten. To the same great end, the poplar, the ash, the lilac, &c. waved before her. For this, the canary sung, the sparrow chirped, the rose and jasmine gave their fragrance, and the *heart's-ease bloomed!* Oh! how often did her dear fingers hold this little flower's velvet variegated leaves, while her dear benign eyes dwelt with admiration on their tints and texture; adoring and praising Him, who "bestowed their beauty," and then added them to the countless indulgences granted to one of the senses of ungrateful man! *Never, never,* can this flower be neglected by me! *Never never* can I see it without remembering the loved hand that used to hold it. Her *heaven-ward* pleasures, her exquisite feeling, and abhorrence of cruelty, did not give place to Cowper himself; who, I have often felt, would have highly esteemed the acquisition of her acquaintance.

A sermon just heard reminds me, I have strangely passed over a very prominent feature in the character I have attempted—viz. her great enjoyment of, and reverence for, the Lord's day. It was indeed to her, "a delight;" always, or all days, even in extreme ill health, and, as much as possible, to the end of her course, an early riser, on this consecrated one she would not allow *a failing body,* after, perhaps, *a night's watching,* half an hour's indulgence! The vigour of the mind triumphed over its companion's demands; and as long as she could step out of bed, it was forsaken in order to devote much time to the celebration of a day, she regarded as typical of the rest that remains for the people of God; and not, therefore, to be "*wasted,*" as she termed it, in sleep. On this day she would not *willingly* "speak her own words," or allow secular conversation.

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In 1782, when "longing for the rest that remains for the people of God," she wrote as follows:

'Come, dearest Emmanuel, come!
Nor longer thy visit delay,
But take the poor fugitive home,
With thee in thy kingdom to stay.
To see thee enthroned in light,
And fall at thy footstool with awe!
Overcome with the dazzling sight,
As near to thy presence I draw!

The brightness of glory thou art,
And cherubim gaze and adore!
The delight of each sanctified heart,
The God of all grace, and all power!
To serve thee on earth be my choice;
To praise thee, in heaven above:
To speak of thy truth with my voice;
And feel the effects of thy love.

Till quite overcome by thy grace,
My nature shall yield up its power,
And fitted to see thy bless'd face,
I wait for the rapturous hour,
When Jesus the fiat shall give,
That frees me for ever from pain,
And takes me in glory to live,
Where He with the Father does reign.

To God, the great Author of bliss,
To Jesus, the faithful and true,
To the Spirit of Grace and of Peace,
Be glory ascribed, as due.
Equal honour to each be address'd,
By all that his power sustains;
By all that in heaven now rest,
By each who that mansion obtains.'

Hoping that you will excuse the many defects, which you will doubtless observe, in the foregoing narrative, I remain yours, in obedience,

H. F. GILBERT.

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